United Nations A/70/118

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 June 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 28 (b) of the preliminary list*
Social development: social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Integrating volunteering in the next decade

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/138 that the Secretary-General report at its seventieth session on the implementation of that resolution and propose a plan of action to integrate volunteering into peace and development efforts over the next decade and beyond.

The period since 2012 has seen continued growth in public recognition of volunteerism as a common asset through research, international declarations, celebratory events and the promotion of volunteer opportunities for diverse and marginalized people, such as women and youth. The second *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Transforming Governance* was published in 2015.

Supportive policies and laws, volunteer management standards, funding, volunteer accreditation and volunteer capacity development are increasing the facilitation of volunteerism for peace and development. Innovative and diverse volunteering schemes and infrastructures are widening opportunities for volunteers to engage from the public and private sectors and schools, and from other countries, including in the South-South context. Online technology, in particular, is expanding opportunities for people from around the world to volunteer formally and informally from grass-roots to global levels. Also expanding are networks and platforms to exchange volunteering practices and research and facilitate joint programming. National and global discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development framework have seen unprecedented levels of volunteer-supported community engagement.

* A/70/50.

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Evidence exists that when volunteerism is integrated into national development strategies and United Nations plans, people are increasingly able to contribute to achievements in education, health, governance, sustainable livelihoods, security and peace, environment, gender and social inclusion. More attention, however, will need to be paid in order to ensure the social and physical protection of the huge cadre of volunteers.

Recognizing both the progress made on volunteerism and the continuing need to recognize its essential contributions better, the plan of action identifies the following three strategic objectives for deepening the integration of volunteering in peace and development for the next decade and beyond: (a) bolstering ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement and widening the enabling environment for citizen action; (b) integrating volunteerism into national and global strategies for the post-2015 development agenda; and (c) measuring volunteerism to contribute to a holistic understanding of the engagement of people and their well-being and be part of the monitoring of the sustainable development goals.

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	State of volunteerism	3
III.	Progress on implementation	6
	A. Recognition and promotion	6
	B. Facilitation	9
	C. Networking	13
	D. Integration	16
IV.	Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond	21
	A. Background	21
	B. Global framework	22
	C. Strategic objectives	23
	D. Actions	25
	E. Institutional arrangements	31
	F. Resource arrangements	32
V.	Conclusions and recommendations	32

I. Introduction

1. In resolution 52/17 of 1997, the General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers to recognize the valuable contribution of volunteer action in addressing global issues. The United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) was designated as the focal point for implementation and follow-up. General Assembly resolution 56/38 marked the end of the International Year of Volunteers, in which the Assembly recognized the important role of volunteerism for "any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination". That resolution was among a series calling for reporting on how Governments, the United Nations system and other stakeholders were supporting volunteering. In resolution 57/106 of 2002, the General Assembly reaffirmed the role of volunteerism, including mutual aid and self-help, service delivery, campaigning and advocacy and other forms of civic participation, in helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

2. The report of the Secretary-General in 2012 on the follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers (A/67/153) indicated that many General Assembly recommendations on volunteering had been taken up by Governments, United Nations entities, civil society actors and private sector stakeholders (see General Assembly resolutions 57/106, 60/134, 63/153 and 66/67). The publication of the first *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Universal Values for Global Well-being*[1] and the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011 accelerated the momentum for recognizing, promoting, facilitating and networking volunteerism. In turn, that helped to ensure that volunteering contributions were integrated into achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable peace and development agendas.

3. Anticipating discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/138, requested the Secretary-General to report again at its seventieth session and to include a plan of action, developed by UNV, for consideration by Member States that would further integrate volunteering into peace and development in the next decade and beyond. The present report reviews progress on volunteerism from 2012 to the present, including how it is contributing to peace and development, its role in consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and the potential sustainable development goals and presents a proposed plan of action for the next decade and beyond (2016-2030).

II. State of volunteerism

4. Volunteerism and volunteer voices played a key role in consultations led by the United Nations Development Group on the post-2015 development agenda. From 2013 to 2015, more than 8 million people from 194 countries participated in nearly 100 national and 11 thematic consultations, 6 thematic dialogue strands in over 60 countries and "MY World", the United Nations global survey. The annual report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2014 recognized the strong volunteer engagement in those global conversations. Volunteers and civil society groups were instrumental in reaching out to poor and marginalized people,

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.I.12. Available from www.unv.org/en/swvr2011.html.

those normally without the possibility of contributing to the debate on the post-2015 development agenda and a wide range of other stakeholders. The outstanding achievement award of the United Nations Millennium Campaign in 2014 went to the Youth Institute of Mexico City, which collected 1.6 million votes for MY World through 3,000 volunteer youth ambassadors.

5. The global and national consultations are seen by many as launching longer conversations that will ensure the engagement of people with governance actors in planning and delivering on national and global goals. In his synthesis report on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda in 2014, the Secretary-General noted: that volunteerism could be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementing the agenda, could help to expand and mobilize constituencies and engage people in the sustainable development goals, and that volunteer groups could help to localize the new agenda by providing new areas of interaction between Governments and people for concrete and scalable actions (see A/69/700, para. 131).

6. With that continued engagement in mind, the volunteering community has established the post-2015 Volunteering Working Group. Similarly, "IMPACT 2030" is a private sector coalition that encourages employee volunteerism to support the sustainable development goals.

7. The extent of participation in the MY World global survey was an unexpectedly powerful demonstration of people's readiness to engage when avenues are available and accessible. New technologies are revolutionizing informal and formal voluntary citizen engagement at local, national and global levels. Global responses to disaster, such as the Ebola crisis and the earthquake in Nepal, include online volunteers monitoring social media sites to gather news and pleas for help, translating reports and creating and improving maps to assist on-the-ground responders. The People's Climate March in New York in 2014 and related marches in 166 countries, the largest climate change demonstration in history, engaged many informal volunteers through social media.

8. The globalization of economies, the interconnectedness of environmental issues and the ability to share knowledge and events instantaneously across the planet have emphasized the need for all peoples and countries to be able to engage with each other. The *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Transforming Governance*, published in 2015, offers evidence as to how formal and informal volunteers, as citizens, activists and experts, within local, national and global spaces, engage with governance actors to enhance voice and participation, accountability and responsiveness to advance peace and sustainable development. Governance actors include not only national and local governments, but also intergovernmental bodies, private corporations, bilateral donors and foundations, and civil society organizations. The report shows that volunteerism at local levels builds human capacity and that when national Governments create greater space for volunteerism, that widens social inclusion. Global, national and local volunteer networks and groups amplify voice, participation, accountability and responsiveness. Thus, volunteerism represents an invaluable resource for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

9. Economic and political crises, disasters, conflicts and inequalities create both challenges and opportunities for volunteerism. In such contexts, resources diminish at the same time as civil society and volunteers are facing greater demands from Governments and society to fill service gaps and demonstrate results. Despite

exponential growth in Internet access and use throughout the world, two thirds of the world population, the majority of them women, still do not have regular access. The CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation report, entitled *State of Civil Society Report 2014: Reimagining Global Governance*, highlighted trends towards restricting participatory and civil society spaces through policies restricting freedom of assembly, a failure to recognize informal volunteering and restricting and censoring mobile and social media. As the world moves towards implementing and monitoring the sustainable development goals, an enabling environment is necessary to open formal and informal spaces for more volunteers, particularly women and marginalized groups, so that all can contribute.

10. Many Governments are establishing and diversifying national volunteering schemes, approving and revising supportive policies, laws and regulations and including volunteering and community engagement in national strategies and programming. In support of this, United Nations country offices and missions are integrating volunteering and civic participation into their programming, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and "One United Nations" plans. Volunteer-involving organizations from civil society and the private and public sectors are supporting national development plans through diverse approaches, including national volunteer centres, community groups, online volunteering, international volunteers and volunteer management capacity-building.

11. With the largest population of young people in history[2] and as youth make up a large proportion of many national populations, especially in developing countries, Governments are prioritizing youth volunteerism. Youth volunteerism not only engages that large segment of the population in positive activities that contribute to peace and development, but also bolsters the personal growth and employability of young people.

12. Private sector volunteering, such as corporate employee volunteer networks and knowledge-sharing, continues to evolve and spread. Increasingly, businesses are embracing the return on investment accrued through volunteering in terms of benefits to employees and marketing, and are stepping forward to contribute to global development through volunteerism.

13. More Governments and organizations are engaging in studies and measurement of volunteering and its contribution, although the lack of comparable research and measurement on volunteerism remains a challenge. However, the International Labour Organization (ILO) nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2013 approved a resolution that officially incorporated volunteer work as one of three types of work and called for measuring it along with other labour studies, building on previous approval of the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*, published by ILO in 2011. Such evidence will be important, given calls for the sustainable development goals to go beyond quantitative targets by also measuring qualitative targets related to inclusion, equity, quality and participation. Volunteerism is both a measure of participation and a resource for gathering enhanced, disaggregated data to track progress and ensure that no one is left behind.

[2] There are about 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10 and 24, according to the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth (see www.un.org/youthenvoy/2015/04/10-things-didnt-know-worlds-population/).

14. In two workshops in 2015, volunteer-involving organizations exchanged good practices on how to assess volunteering impact and explored indicators to use for the sustainable development goals. The outcomes of those proactive workshops contributed to a workshop in Bonn on strategic directions for global research on volunteering for sustainable development, 2015-2030, attended by academics and research practitioners. A road map was articulated for informing research proposals, preparing a global volunteer research agenda,, inviting Governments to facilitate volunteering and calling for more resources for volunteerism research.

III. Progress on implementation

15. This section reviews progress made in volunteerism since the previous report in 2012, continuing to use the pillars of (a) recognition and promotion, (b) facilitation, (c) networking and (d) integration.

A. Recognition and promotion

16. The first pillar focuses on efforts to increase public recognition, understanding and appreciation of all forms of volunteerism and its contributions and value. That can be done, inter alia, through high-level actions, public days, awards and events and studies and research. The public and official recognition of volunteerism as a common asset in turn raises awareness of the need to promote the inclusive engagement of diverse and marginalized communities and groups as volunteers.

17. Volunteer groups have been increasingly engaging in global forums, such as the 65th Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, which was held in 2014, and volunteerism has been recognized in a number of high-level international resolutions and reports. Examples include General Assembly resolutions 67/290, 69/134, 69/140 and 69/243 and the report of the Secretary-General on accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (A/68/202 and Corr. 1). Other relevant resolutions include the action plan of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the rapprochement of cultures 2013-2022 (194 EX/10); resolutions 2011/8 and 2013/6 of the Economic and Social Council on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations; resolution 2012/1 of the Commission on Population and Development on adolescents and youth; and resolution 51/1 of the Commission on Social Development on policies and programmes involving youth. The important role of women volunteers in disaster risk reduction was also highlighted in resolutions 56/2 and 58/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters.

18. Since 2012, annual observation of the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on 5 December has expanded. International Volunteer Day was observed in more than 90 countries in 2014, including Bermuda, Brunei Darussalam, the Congo, Israel, Kuwait, Myanmar, Samoa, Spain and Zimbabwe. Events take place nationwide in Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau and Tunisia and Kenya and Namibia have committed to annual celebrations. The day is observed by United Nations entities, such as the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and by civil society organizations, such as Oxfam and Uganda National Volunteers. In Suriname, a local business took part in a beach clean-up campaign to protect sea turtles. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) showcased young volunteers advocating for sustainable peace through street clean-ups, pro-environment murals and a peace concert. In addition, many countries and stakeholders mark separate volunteer days and even weeks, including France, Ireland and Rwanda, GlaxoSmithKline[3] and Points of Light. Madagascar launched a Year of Volunteering in October 2014.

19. Volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations form a large part of the commemoration of other special days, such as World Food Day (led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), International Coastal Cleanup Day (jointly commemorated by Brunei Darussalam and Royal Dutch Shell), World Water Day (Global Brigades), Community Partnership Day (Novartis International AG), International Day of Peace (Service Civil International, Belgium), World Environment Day (Volunteer for Bangladesh), World Thinking Day (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts).

20. High-level awards and activities, with media support, both recognize and raise awareness of the importance of volunteers and volunteerism. In 2015, the UNV/Middle East Broadcasting Center Al Amal Youth Volunteering Award recognized the achievements of five volunteers, aged from 18 to 29, from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. Awards were also presented by Argentina, Bhutan, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The "Best Environmental Mobile Application" award at the Mobile Web Awards in 2014 went to an application created by two volunteers with UNEP Kenya and the Great Apes Survival Partnership. Turkey launched a voluntary envoys project to promote volunteering for community development. The Government of Kazakhstan created a video entitled "I am a volunteer" for dissemination through electronic mass media.

21. Research on volunteerism ranges from describing volunteers and their contexts to measuring and assessing development contributions. National volunteering surveys have been conducted in Colombia, Norway, Romania, Spain and Zambia. The Sri Lankan National Survey on Volunteerism in 2014 was conducted by 1,250 volunteers covering all districts and was voluntarily supervised by district officers from the Ministry of Social Services, Welfare and Livestock Development. The American University in Cairo studied the characteristics of students most involved in voluntary community outreach in 2013. CorpsGiving, United Way Worldwide, the Ecuadorian Consortium for Social Responsibility, the International Association of Volunteer Effort and Realized Worth are among organizations researching private sector volunteering. The study undertaken by the European Commission on *Employee Volunteering and Employee Volunteering in Humanitarian Aid in Europe* (2014) found that employee volunteerism, while more common in the private sector, is increasing in the public and third sectors. Centro de Investigación y Estudios sobre Sociedad Civil AC partners with the national statistical agency to research and measure volunteering in Mexico. In 2014, the Italian National Institute of Statistics,

[3] Mention of names of specific companies in the present report does not imply endorsement by the United Nations.

the National Coordination of Volunteer Support Centres and the Volunteering and Participation Foundation cooperated in the first survey on voluntary work in Italy. The Beijing Volunteer Federation launched a timekeeping system to track voluntary service in 2012 that has since registered more than 2.5 million volunteers and over 47,000 projects. The observatory of France Volontaires annually produces maps of volunteering in the world. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) conducted a massive *Global Review on Volunteering* in 2015, which will strengthen volunteer management knowledge in the organization and wider humanitarian sector. In 2015, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and the Institute of Development Studies released a report entitled *The Role of Volunteering in Sustainable Development* which found that volunteers play unique roles by contributing to inclusion, innovation, local ownership, participation and inspiration. Also in 2015, the United Nations published its *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Transforming Governance*.

22. Volunteerism can significantly contribute to ensuring that "no one gets left behind" when implementing the new sustainable development framework, but only if volunteering opportunities are promoted for all. Uganda National Volunteers offers specific schemes to engage diverse segments of society, such as skills-building with youth volunteers, addressing domestic violence with women, engaging the growing populations of retirees, matching seniors with youth and linking corporate volunteers with local communities. The joint Government-civil society national volunteer programme in Burkina Faso proactively engages people living with HIV, women, youth and immigrants as volunteers. The Volunteer Corps of the Third Age of Senegal, Experiment e.V. in Germany and the Habitat for Humanity "Ageing in place" partnership are engaging in senior, retiree and intergenerational volunteering. Nippon Skilled Volunteers Association sends senior retired Japanese volunteers to non-profit host organizations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Austria and Caritas in the Syrian Arab Republic have jointly supported a migrant volunteering campaign in both countries. Australian Volunteers International facilitates indigenous participation through the International Indigenous Volunteer Network and innovative programmes for indigenous youth. The Singapore International Foundation partners with women's empowerment groups. International Service Ireland and the East Eagle Foundation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo encourage women and differently-abled people to volunteer.

23. The UNV global youth programme, including the United Nations Youth Volunteers, highlights youth volunteerism as an avenue for the development both of communities and youth themselves. The European Voluntary Service is a programme funded by the European Commission, through which anyone between the ages of 18 and 30 and legally resident in Europe can volunteer internationally with host organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe or South America. Youth schemes and volunteering platforms have been set up by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Belgium, Germany, Guinea, Lesotho, Lithuania, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan, and by universities, such as Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan, and civil society organizations, such as Restless Development and YMCA.

B. Facilitation

24. The momentum built through recognition of how volunteerism contributes to peace and development and the promotion of the inclusion of more people, especially the marginalized, can only be maintained through supportive volunteerism policies, structures and capacities for effective volunteer engagement and management, including adequate resources. Facilitation of different volunteering schemes catering to varying needs of groups of people expands the range of opportunities for engagement and inclusion.

25. Supportive regulatory frameworks include consideration not only of new policies and specific volunteerism laws, but also of existing laws and standards, including civil society and labour regulations, which may affect people's ability to volunteer. In China, 18 provinces and 16 cities have local laws and regulations on voluntary work. Volunteerism is present in all social legislation in Cabo Verde. In France, the 2014 charter of reciprocal commitments between the State, association movement and communities recognizes volunteerism as a foundation of community life. In 2014, the Ministry of Planning of Iraq, the Kurdistan Volunteers Organization and UNV conducted a conference on legislation on volunteerism. Sometimes policies addressing other issues include volunteerism, such as the Kazakhstan law on the State policy for youth, which authorizes facilitation of youth volunteerism. The Dominican Republic law on volunteerism calls for the inclusion of volunteerism in the design of all development plans. In Mali, a similar law requires that volunteer selection integrate positive discrimination, favouring the differently-abled, women and vulnerable groups.

26. The security and well-being of volunteers are critically important considerations for both policies and management practices. Increasingly Governments and volunteer-involving organizations are defining specific protections and benefits for at least some volunteer schemes. The International Cultural Youth Exchange Federation, the Korea International Cooperation Agency, the Singapore International Foundation and Skillshare International provide comprehensive insurance coverage, including emergency medical and security evacuation, for international volunteers. The IFRC global volunteer accident insurance, with basic coverage and protection, resulted in 100,000 more volunteers being insured through national IFRC societies.

27. Governments hold the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the security and protection of national and international volunteers within their borders. The Governments of Austria, France and New Zealand provide volunteers with insurance and some social benefits. In Belgium, all volunteers are insured and may receive some travel, food and accommodation reimbursements, and some young jobseekers and seniors can volunteer without losing allowances or social rights. The Government of Colombia contracts an accident insurance policy on an annual basis to protect volunteer members of relief agencies that are part of the national system for the prevention of and attention to disasters. Many Governments, especially during periods of conflict and crisis, when volunteers are at high risk, lack policies and the means to implement policies that ensure sufficient death, disability and medical service benefits for local and national volunteers, or proper health and safety standards for volunteer assignments. Countries such as Burkina Faso report resource and capacity challenges in guaranteeing social protection for all citizens, including volunteers.

28. Continuing commitments of funding and other resources are critical for ensuring sustainable volunteer engagement in peace and development. Lithuania, Timor-Leste, Zimbabwe and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) finance training for volunteer managers. Public funding for volunteer work has increased in at least nine regions in Kazakhstan. The patronage and NGO law of Sao Tome and Principe encourages the private sector to fund social initiatives. Public and civil society organizations, such as the offshore islands conservation programme of Antigua and Barbuda and Habitat for Humanity, receive private sector funding. The Danish parliament has established a permanent basic fund, to be matched with local financing, in support of the work and capacity of approximately 65 local volunteer centres. The Niger and Norway both fund voluntary non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grant tax exemptions. Most international volunteer programmes receive the majority of their funding from national Governments. However, some Governments are moving away from core and long-term funding. Additional funding challenges are linked to tougher competition among providers, greater private sector engagement, a stronger focus on results-based management and more interest in short-term skills-building in volunteering, especially for youth.

29. Governments continue to diversify funding to UNV. Major partners in the Special Voluntary Fund for innovative volunteerism initiatives include Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Switzerland. New and emerging donors include Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, the Czech Republic, India, Israel, Morocco and Thailand. Germany was the founding donor of the UNDP trust fund for support to United Nations Youth Volunteers. Donors are increasingly interested in fully funding United Nations Volunteers. Brazil launched the Sergio de Mello scholarship in honour of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq, to support Brazilian United Nations Youth Volunteers serving in humanitarian assignments globally. Luxembourg, in addition to funding its nationals, supports triangular cooperation by funding international United Nations Volunteers from developing countries.

30. Volunteer-involving networks and federations play key roles as partners in facilitating volunteerism. Global organizations, such as the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and Habitat for Humanity, have adopted strategies and policies to enable volunteerism. The National Council for Voluntary Organizations of the United Kingdom, Service Civil International, Belgium, the International Cultural Youth Exchange Federation and United Way Worldwide have established standards and even accreditation to ensure the quality of governance and volunteer management by their members and partners. The Peace Corps is collaborating with the Government of Malaysia to support the creation of a Malaysian volunteer-sending corps through a training programme that will be available to other interested Governments in the future.

31. Quality support for volunteers in terms of management and training directly impacts effectiveness and retention. Domestic and international entities, including ActionAid International, the Burkina Faso National Volunteers Programme, Frivillighet Norge, Global Brigades, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Nicro South Africa, Oxfam-Québec and the National Volunteering Secretariat in Sri Lanka design, apply and exchange management and training practices and materials. The Association for Democratic Prosperity-Zid in Montenegro opens up its volunteerism training to NGOs, individuals, public institutions and businesses. United Nations entities, such as FAO, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on

Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNV and the World Food Programme, provide orientation, supervision and training for volunteers.

32. Volunteer training can include specialized training specifically linked to volunteer engagements, such as training by UN-Women in Jordan on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, using their toolkit on gender advocacy; the White Helmets Commission courses on humanitarian volunteerism in Argentina; training on international human rights standards and civil society monitoring provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Italian Red Cross training on rescue operations for nurses in the Islamic Republic of Iran; regional youth volunteer management training of trainers delivered through the "Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future" programme and the Peace Corps "Volunteer2Volunteer" guide for community volunteering. IOM and Volunteer Ireland have created a toolkit for the project on grass-roots integration through volunteering experience that takes place in Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to integrate migrants as community volunteers.

33. Increasingly, the management of volunteer recruitment, opportunities and tracking is occurring online. Information and communications technology platforms are opening up opportunities for volunteer groups to reach out to and include more and more diverse volunteers. In 2014, the China Volunteer Federation launched a volunteer cloud information system that standardizes volunteer recruitment, service records and the transferring and renewing of volunteers. That system now includes 15 provinces, with 8.68 million registered volunteers, 92,000 volunteer organizations and 7.2 million volunteerism projects. In the United States of America, Boeing, Microsoft, Realized Worth and TechSoup Global are working on new technologies to support corporate volunteering and establish industry-wide standards. The Spanish Red Cross manages their more than 200,000 volunteers through the Internet, with volunteers registering online for shifts, training and other activities, including online volunteering. Volunteer Ireland uses the web to post guides and resources supporting different volunteering schemes, including corporate volunteers and volunteers for large-scale events and festivals. GlaxoSmithKline's PULSE, a skills-based volunteering programme, uses an intranet site, available internally to all 100,000 employees worldwide, for receiving applications to volunteer. The National Volunteer Centre in Denmark lists more than 350 nationwide voluntary health and human service organizations on its social guide database.

34. Online volunteering, including innovative microvolunteering opportunities, continues to expand and diversify. In 2014, 10,887 United Nations Online Volunteers, 60 per cent of whom were women, contributed to development and peace activities around the world, completing 16,134 assignments. Today's Afghanistan Conciliation Trust has bolstered organizational capacity and researched donors through engaging online volunteers. The Mayor of London's Team London Speed Volunteering project sets up flexible and creative microvolunteering opportunities for youth.

35. Another trend is more formalized recognition and accreditation of volunteer service through such means as certificates, academic credits and consideration as a qualifying experience. The VALUE Network of the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom, and 20 other partners validates learning through volunteering in universities in member countries. The European Union provides a youth pass for

members of the European Volunteer Service to recognize non-formal learning. In Liberia, Romania and Togo volunteering, especially through national volunteer programmes, is recognized as professional experience and has enabled significant numbers of alumni to compete successfully for jobs. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) incorporated volunteerism, as an assessment criterion for education and relevant experience, into its leadership pool initiative for international posts.

36. Innovative and diverse schemes and infrastructure for volunteering continue to evolve. Informal volunteering, sports, online, private and public sector, diaspora and South-South, regional and international volunteering are all expanding the opportunities to engage.

37. Volunteer engagement in communities continues to move beyond formal organizations. Changes in Indian laws in 2013 to prevent violence against women were spurred on by massive volunteer demonstrations. Volunteers, mainly informal, also supported research and status reviews to inform the process of legal reform of the Government of India. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, volunteers and community members in Cuba, most of whom were personally affected, proactively engaged in response efforts. In an example of people-to-people volunteering in the Russian Federation, a social media community, Volunteers on Wheels, connects people in need with willing drivers. Similarly, the Shovel Brigade Mob mobilized 400 volunteers to shovel out homebound neighbours after massive snow storms in Buffalo, United States, in 2014. Across Japan, 5.4 million informal volunteers are providing dementia care and support through innovative grass-roots social care networks.

38. Public sector volunteering is being facilitated by Governments. In the summer, teachers in Guatemala volunteer in camps for primary school children. During the floods in Malawi in 2015, public sector workers responded overwhelmingly by volunteering emergency services. On national tree planting days in Lesotho, public workers engage with their communities. The Adele Reproductive Health Foundation in Cameroon recruits public workers as volunteer community health workers. With the agreement of the Singapore Civil Service, public sector staff members who volunteer with the Singapore International Foundation are given unrecorded leave.

39. Diaspora volunteering enables emigrants to serve their countries of heritage. Senegal has established a solidarity volunteer corps, mobilizing second- and third-generation immigrant youth from France to volunteer. Under the Diasporas for Development initiative, Cuso International is recruiting 40 American professionals of Ethiopian, Filipino, Jamaican, Kenyan and Peruvian origin for volunteer placements in their country of affinity to support employment creation projects.

40. Volunteering in sports can boost social and development outcomes. The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace has joined forces with the Government of Ukraine, UNDP, UNV and the Union of European Football Associations, to engage rural youth as young football volunteers, who raise awareness of HIV issues in their communities. The Government of Turkey, together with the National Olympic Committee and UNICEF, has established a system and training programmes for sports volunteerism. The Government of Kyrgyzstan works closely with universities, recruiting students as volunteers for different sports events and associations. The 2014 World Cup in Brazil relied on tens of thousands of volunteers for its success.

41. Student volunteering and volunteer services integrated into school curricula encourages lifelong service. Such efforts are facilitated by AFS Germany, Global Brigades, Innovations in Civic Participation and Safety First for Girls of Zambia.

42. Private sector employee volunteering continues to grow, although it still tends to be mainly in international corporations. Citigroup has more than 70,000 volunteers in 479 cities in 93 countries, who address literacy and education, housing, environment, health, human services and disaster relief. Twenty-five thousand employees of Tata Group, India, have volunteered more than 17,000 hours across the world through Tata Engage. Deutsche Bahn Schenker has collected products for children and seniors in Romania. ANZ Royal Bank of Cambodia allows eight hours per year to employees for community volunteering. Standard Chartered Bank in Brunei Darussalam allows staff members three days of volunteer leave annually. General Electric Foundation volunteers support campaigns against breast and brain cancer. More than 30 per cent of Allianz Malaysia Berhad employees have volunteered and the company held its first volunteer appreciation dinner in 2013.

43. International and regional volunteering continues to be valued as an effective means for skills transfer and cross cultural understanding. The European Union Aid Volunteers initiative is preparing to deploy trained and well-prepared European citizens in 2016 to assist humanitarian projects worldwide. The Korea International Cooperation Agency dispatches Korean volunteers to Cambodia to serve in provincial development programmes. VSO and Raleigh International capacitate the development of youth services with local government in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Government of Guatemala project, "Guatematica", partners with volunteers from the Japan International Cooperation Agency to upgrade mathematics education in Guatemala. Fredskorpset Norway sends southern volunteers to northern assignments.

44. Increasingly international volunteering is South-South and regional. The ECOWAS volunteer programme has fielded youth volunteers in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to address health and education. The African Union administers a regional youth volunteering scheme. Fiji has signed volunteerism exchange agreements with Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Similarly, the Pacific Alliance countries of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru will exchange volunteers aged between 18 and 30. Brunei Darussalam initiated the ASEAN Young Professionals Volunteer Corps, bringing together young professionals from member States as volunteers in education, health care, agriculture, special needs care, disaster preparedness, community livelihoods and environmental health. China, Poland, VSO Bahaginan (Philippines), I.N.D.I.A. TRUST and VSO Jitolee (Kenya and Uganda) deploy volunteers in the South-South context. In 2014, 3,366 international United Nations Volunteers, or 73 per cent, were from the South serving countries of the South. The White Helmets Commission of Argentina rapidly deploys civilian volunteers to emergency and crisis situations around the world.

C. Networking

45. Associations, networks and platforms for volunteerism have continued to expand and strengthen, nationally, regionally and globally. That enables cooperation across sectors, communities and countries for scaling up volunteering structures,

exchanging good volunteer management and training practices, sharing data and research and promoting joint volunteerism for development. New technology is enabling innovative networking from the local to national levels and across borders.

46. Governments have continued to make progress through official designation and recognition of strategically located focal points to facilitate volunteerism networks and collaboration between the public, private and civil society sectors. In Cameroon, different ministries carry out volunteer projects throughout society, including for differently-abled people and women, coordinated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education. Rwanda has established the National Itorero Commission to work with stakeholders on volunteering programmes. In many countries, coordination is led by civil society networks, including the independent provincial volunteer centres in Austria, the Cambodia Volunteering Network, France Volontaires, Volunteer Ireland, Frivillighet Norge in Norway, the Tamm Volunteers Network in Qatar and the national network of volunteer centres in Romania. Both neighbourhood/territorial volunteer centres and interest-based affinity volunteer centres operate in Ecuador. The Volunteer Information and Resource Centre in Viet Nam links organizations and volunteers through a virtual platform, which attracts youth. The Government of Kazakhstan is facilitating volunteer centres, initiatives and training in preparation for EXPO 2017 in Astana. The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Argentina partners Government with civil society.

47. Regional and global networks continue to broaden joint programming, knowledge-sharing, advocacy and promotion. Those networks represent the diversity of volunteerism. The International Forum for Volunteering in Development, with a global membership of 34 organizations, exists to share information, generate good practices, promote research and enhance cooperation across international volunteering and development sectors. The International Association of Volunteer Effort convenes global and regional conferences, supports networks among corporate, youth and national volunteering groups, and researches and advocates for volunteering. The Talloires Network links regional higher education networks and higher education institutions in 72 countries committed to incorporating civic engagement and community service into their research and teaching. The European Volunteer Centre and the Arab Federation for Voluntary Activities are regional networks that champion volunteerism, volunteer management knowledge-sharing and cooperation. The CIVICUS local, national, regional and international network spans the spectrum of civil society, including volunteer-involving organizations and informal volunteers; its annual reports on the state of civil society regularly address linkages between civil action and volunteering.

48. Largely due to unprecedented volunteer networking, volunteerism and citizen and community engagement were identified as important components of the post-2015 development agenda in national consultation reports, including in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Cuba, Gabon, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, the Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkmenistan and Vanuatu. In 2014, the Lima Declaration was drafted at the annual conference of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development as a global statement of the agreed priorities and commitment of volunteer groups, to ensure that volunteerism is integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. Building on similar actions at the conference of the International Association of Volunteer Effort and other network meetings, the

post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, coordinated by the International Forum for Volunteering in Development, was launched.

49. IMPACT 2030 is a global collaboration led by the private sector to mobilize corporate volunteers around the world. Founding members are IBM, Perkins Coie, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, SAP SE, Waggener Edstrom Communications and United Parcel Service. On International Volunteer Day in 2014, the IMPACT 2030 Declaration, which spells out the commitment of the members to the sustainable development agenda, was delivered to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning.

50. New technology not only facilitates volunteer opportunities and management, but also boosts knowledge exchange and allows the continued commitment of volunteers after assignments in situ. The IFRC "Going red for Syria" campaign prompted global reactions to raising awareness of the risks faced by humanitarian volunteers in the Syrian Arab Republic. In Spain, an online platform supported by the private sector allows volunteers to work from home. Social media enable alumni of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace youth leadership camp to continue helping through networks and exchanges. Alumni of Scope Global in Australia strengthen volunteer networks through websites. The organization 500 Days 500 Ways hosts a website for volunteers and volunteer groups to discuss advances they have made in sustainable development in the countdown to the end date for the Millennium Development Goals.

51. Academic institutions are beneficial members of volunteering networks. Volunteer Service Abroad, New Zealand, has established a graduate volunteering programme with three universities. Centro de Investigación y Estudios sobre Sociedad Civil AC assists volunteer networks in Mexico by promoting volunteerism with the government statistical office and academic communities. Oxfam-Québec links its alumni to development working groups in primary and secondary schools and universities. The White Helmets Commission in Argentina has agreements with three universities to support volunteerism in emergency situations, especially through preparedness and prevention training.

52. Conventional media remain powerful partners in voluntary action and can generate an important multiplier effect. The Government of Guinea encourages media to support volunteering; 15 radio journalists were trained on covering volunteerism in a workshop whose organizers included the Association of Women Journalists of Guinea. A private national television station in Bulgaria, bTV, initiated an award-winning, annual, mass volunteer event called "Let's Clean Bulgaria Together". In Côte d'Ivoire, ASBL Kouady broadcasts volunteerism training programmes through radio stations.

53. National and international linkages can add capacity and understanding and, like the media, can also create a multiplier effect. In Rwanda, the Rwandan Red Cross, Rwanda Volunteer Network, and VSO cooperate on public events promoting volunteerism. The Norwegian Red Cross, together with the IFRC South-East Asia regional delegation, are supporting the Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese Red Cross societies in using social media for malaria prevention activities. Partnership agreements between Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, the Peace Corps, VSO and World Friends Korea support collaboration at local, regional and global levels in operations and strategy: topics include volunteer safety, training and technical assistance and impact assessment. The Emirates Environmental Group is a

professional working group of students, individuals, families, corporate members, federal and local government agencies, universities, colleges, schools and regional and international institutions dedicated to advancing environmental protection and responsible waste management through education, action and community involvement.

D. Integration

54. The Lima Declaration states that sustainable development is not possible without volunteers. Recognizing that, Governments and United Nations entities are integrating volunteerism as a means of addressing specific national strategies (for example, the Timor-Leste strategy for youth) and development plans (for example in Burkina Faso, Paraguay and Turkey). The "Buen Vivir" national plan of Ecuador prioritizes voluntary civic participation, especially for traditionally excluded groups. Integration of volunteerism into "One United Nations" plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks continues in at least 40 countries, including Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Trinidad and Tobago.

55. However, the challenge remains that volunteering — international or national, specialist or grass-roots, involving seniors or youth, in the corporate or public sectors, in situ or online, formal or informal — remains underutilized as an important resource for peace, sustainable development and human well-being. Progress will only be made with stronger evidence as to how volunteerism enables the engagement of individuals and progress towards achieving peace and sustainable development. Based on the top priorities noted in the MY World survey, the present report sets out below how volunteerism is already contributing to sustainable development in education, health, governance, sustainable livelihoods (poverty, jobs, water, sanitation and food), security and peace, environment and gender and social inclusion.

Education

56. Volunteering is enhancing access to and the quality of education, especially at primary levels and in rural areas, for example in Angola, Cambodia, Guatemala, the Niger, South Africa and Uganda. Evaluations of literacy-focused community volunteer programmes at primary levels in Ghana, India and Kenya have demonstrated a strong success rate. The national literacy plan in the Dominican Republic is close to eradicating illiteracy, thanks to volunteers. Education volunteers are also augmenting Internet access and other skills: for example, Orphans Overseas establishes computer labs in Vietnamese orphanages. Open Data Kosovo, supported by UNDP, teaches young women computer science and gender monitoring. GlaxoSmithKline employees support science education. Girls in Tech Colombia educate women of all ages about technology and entrepreneurship through an online volunteer platform. VSO Nepal and community volunteers from the Dalit Welfare Organization have assisted children from the marginalized Dalit community to regularly attend mainstream schools.

Health

57. The Ebola epidemic in West African countries mobilized extraordinary efforts by Governments, civil society organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders and

Samaritan's Purse, the United Nations and local communities. Guinea mobilized 2,100 young volunteers. The Government of Ethiopia sent 198 health professional volunteers to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, who were joined by medical volunteers from Cuba, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and other countries. The United States Agency for International Development, the European Union and the World Bank called for volunteers to help with the outbreak. Linking in with thousands of community volunteers, 116 United Nations Volunteers and 388 United Nations Online Volunteers supported Ebola awareness and sensitization campaigns, prevention and post-recovery measures, tracing of patients' relatives, mapping and coordination of support and food distribution.

58. United Nations Volunteers continue to support HIV awareness and care in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar, Malawi, Timor-Leste, Uganda and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Call of Culture heads the "STOP TB" programme in Saudi Arabia, engaging medical student volunteers. Globally, YMCA reaches 13 million participants in volunteer-supported exercises that help with sex education and HIV prevention and treatment. The Children's Orthopaedic Hospital in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is supported by a large volunteer community of mothers and retired professionals. Voluntary community health workers are essential to health-extension programmes in many countries, including Ethiopia and Zambia, and working in conjunction with UNICEF in Cambodia and Yemen. The Red Cross in Senegal supports vaccination programmes, vitamins for children and HIV awareness programmes. Community health volunteers in Egypt, trained by IOM, help migrants to become aware of and gain access to health-care services. Doctors Without Borders offers volunteer medical placements in fields, such as nursing, public health, physical therapy, midwifery and dentistry in over 20 countries.

Governance

59. Volunteers are supporting local government programmes to enhance participation and civic education in Bangladesh, Malawi and Nepal. During the elections for governor and vice-governor of Jakarta in 2012, grass-roots volunteers, regardless of party affiliation, acted to ensure a fair and transparent process; 45,000 official volunteers at polling stations were outnumbered by those informal volunteer watchdogs. In Mauritius, UNDP and UNV helped to establish a non-State actor unit in the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to promote civil society organizations and volunteer engagement. Lithuania conducted a programme to strengthen cooperation, coordination and voluntary capacity in civil society organizations. In Ecuador, 7,600 volunteers across the country raised awareness of voting rights. United Nations Volunteers served as audit supervisors for all ballot boxes during the presidential election in Afghanistan in 2014. Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh is creating a mobile phone application that allows fast and reliable data collection from women in 800,000 households in poor urban settlements across 23 towns. The information collected from those women about issues in their communities will be uploaded to a web database to monitor project progress and highlight priority areas.

Sustainable livelihoods (poverty, jobs, water, sanitation and food)

60. Volunteers with Scope Global Australia address poverty alleviation in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Vanuatu and Viet Nam through enterprise promotion, improving market access for farmers, facilitating local fair-trade products,

mariculture and microfinance. Navdanya India supports local farmers to address food security. AID Bangalore volunteers are addressing sustainable waste management and water conservation. In Guatemala, the campaign of the Ministry of Education, "I have something to give", invited more than 10,000 volunteers to address malnutrition and food security by region. The World Food Programme in Mozambique links volunteers with rural communities to address poverty and hunger. In Madagascar, voluntary associations of water users address neighbourhood water, sanitation and hygiene issues. In Angola, Red Cross volunteers address food security through health and agricultural training.

61. Corporate employees are enhancing the job readiness of youth. In Brazil, volunteers from DuPont facilitated training modules in 2014 for youth aged 15 to 21, covering subjects such as business planning, customer service and finance. More than 90 per cent of the participants said that the training had contributed to their professional growth. Through the Flying Challenge initiative, United Way Worldwide and the Airbus Corporate Foundation (in Toulouse, France, Madrid and Wichita, United States) have engaged 260 students in mentoring and tutoring, career-awareness activities and student workshops led by more than 130 Airbus employees and 60 college mentors.

Security and peace

62. Volunteers address human rights, public security, crime management and violence, especially gender-based violence, through campaigns in countries such as Egypt, Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar. In Nicaragua, FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNV are focusing on reducing human insecurity in remote indigenous territories through community volunteering, gender mainstreaming and the promotion of human rights. International Service Ireland is matching human rights volunteers from the United Kingdom with volunteers from organizations in partner countries for a learning exchange. The Zimbabwe National Case Management System has established a cadre of volunteer community childcare workers in all 65 districts, who receive cell phones to facilitate their efforts to strengthen community response to child protection concerns. In Libya, informal volunteers help to protect cultural heritage sites from vandalism. Since 2013, UNODC has partnered with United Nations Online Volunteers to expand the human trafficking case law database, the only global public record on human trafficking cases, containing at least 900 cases from 76 countries.

63. International volunteers are a significant resource for humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. They contribute to medical services, engineering projects, public information, human rights, civil affairs and reintegration of ex-combatants, among many other areas of activity. Service Civil International in Belgium, founded as a peace movement, advances peacebuilding, conflict resolution and disaster risk reduction in its volunteer work camps. In 2014, United Nations Volunteers represented 30 per cent of the international civilian personnel on field missions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs. United Nations Volunteers work on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and State-building in countries such as the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, South Sudan and the Sudan. In Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, the State of Palestine and the Philippines, they also serve in the field of conflict prevention and recovery through United Nations entities. United Nations Volunteers with UNHCR and UNICEF engage in refugee protection, status determination, return

and resettlement, child protection and family reunification in Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia and Western Sahara.

64. Community volunteers and organizations are at the forefront of humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding in Iraq, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Youth Volunteers Rebuilding Darfur, supported by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and the Sudan, three universities and UNV, deployed youth volunteers for nine months in 47 communities across five Darfur states. Young volunteers, trained by experts in basic psychological support, have enabled UNICEF to reach almost 300,000 children and adolescents in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Environment

65. Volunteer groups continue to lead efforts in environmental resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and disaster management. UNEP, Action for Integrated Approach to Development Initiative, Uganda, Greenpeace International, the Indian Youth Climate Network, Plantarse Argentina and others enlist volunteers to raise awareness of and address environmental sustainability and climate change. YMCA holds a global climate strategy conference for volunteers. The UNEP "Hard Rain" project enables youth, especially university students to engage with environmental awareness. The Government of Cameroon partners a community volunteer resilience project for pastoral agroforestry in the far north of the country. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNDP and UNV are working together through volunteers to address desertification in Benin and Zambia. World Heritage Volunteers with UNESCO work across borders, share cultures, preserve natural sites, raise local awareness about cultural heritage and acquire basic preventive, preservation and conservation skills.

66. Volunteers are being trained in environmental emergency response, disaster risk preparedness and risk reduction in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Timor-Leste. IFRC national societies in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia are strengthening their volunteer management, disaster response and first-aid capacities. Volunteer Service Abroad in New Zealand works with Vanuatu, among other countries, on using cell phone technology in disaster preparedness. The Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue has about 18,000 volunteer members (6 per cent of the population of Iceland).

67. Thanks to new technology, volunteers are engaging remotely in disaster response. After the earthquake in Nepal in 2015, Standby Task Force, a loose global organization of several thousand digital volunteers, began monitoring Twitter, Facebook and other social media for reports from Nepal. They translated them, posted to maps and Google Docs, and studied satellite and air reconnaissance photos to create and improve maps, filling critical information gaps to help guide responders. Philippine Red Cross volunteers on community disaster teams during the Haiyan emergency texted updates on emerging risks and potential landslide threats. In Kenya from 2012 to 2013, volunteers produced maps, especially of post-crisis territories, providing data for humanitarian and development action and to local and national public authorities to help peacebuilding efforts.

Gender and social inclusion

68. Women's groups in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jordan, Nigeria and Tunisia are addressing issues such as women's leadership, education and political and economic equality, some in partnership with UN-Women. Through the White Ribbon Volunteer Network, together with UNFPA in China, male volunteers promote the prevention of gender-based violence. Volunteers with Mujeres Latinas en Acción empower Latin American women living in the United States. UN-Women launched the Knowledge Gateway for women's economic empowerment with 25 United Nations Online Volunteers, an online platform that offers women and girls knowledge-sharing and learning opportunities so that they can take charge of their economic future.

69. Volunteers also support the social inclusion of differently-abled people, seniors, immigrants, migrants and youth. The Zenkoku Onyaku Volunteer Network in Japan uses information technology to produce audiobooks much faster than before for people with vision problems. The Beijing Volunteer Federation, through its "Neighbourhood caring" project, encourages volunteers and groups to assist the poor, seniors, the differently-abled, orphans and people living with HIV. The Government of Gambia has created a volunteer platform that offers legal aid to marginalized persons. The municipality of Chacao in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has reactivated a volunteer programme to engage local residents for the benefit of seniors, children and handicapped persons. Volunteers with the Senang Hati Foundation in Bali, Indonesia, organize skills training and social interaction for differently-abled people. Cameroon, Kurdistan and Sri Lanka are explicitly committed to addressing social exclusion and discrimination through volunteerism. The Malsawm Initiative in India, aided by UNDP and UNV, provides differently-abled children with physiotherapy and educational services.

70. Increasingly youth are being challenged to become actors in the socioeconomic development of their own communities and countries through volunteering. The benefits which accrue back to them are empowerment, leadership skills, employability and a commitment to civic engagement. A case in point is the high employment rates of alumni from the national volunteering promotion programmes in Togo and Burkina Faso. The UNV "Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future" programme, active in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, harnesses the power and energy of youth through volunteerism. The Governments of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire are establishing youth volunteer schemes with expert partners. The Urban Youth Fund of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) offers grants and capacity-building that support innovative ideas and solutions implemented by youth-led organizations for job creation, good governance and adequate shelter. YMCA focuses on youth empowerment in 119 countries, including a global leadership programme entitled "Change Agents".

71. Anticipating the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, United Nations entities, including UNFPA, UNDP, UN-Women and the World Health Organization (WHO) have specifically integrated volunteerism into their strategies at global and national levels. In 2014, United Nations Volunteers assigned as health and social workers, lawyers, teachers and climate change analysts, among others, collaborated with UNDP on more than 1,300 projects. The UNICEF "Take Action" campaign encourages educators, parents and youth to take voluntary action on critical global

issues. A globally diverse team of United Nations Online Volunteers collaborated with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to process responses from 193 Governments to the United Nations E-Government Survey.

72. In accordance with its strategic framework for the period 2014-2017, UNV launched five thematic global programmes to demonstrate the importance of volunteerism and United Nations Volunteers in securing access to basic social services, for community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, youth and national capacity-building. Those programmes are implemented through volunteer schemes with partners that include, among others, Anesvad, the European Union, the German Agency for International Cooperation, UNDP, UNESCO and WHO.

73. The present review of the progress made by Governments and stakeholders in the recognition, promotion, facilitation, networking and integration of volunteerism offers evidence of the significant role volunteerism can play in the post-2015 sustainable development framework. The plan of action for integrating volunteerism in peace and development in the next decade and beyond is discussed below.

IV. Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond, 2016-2030

A. Background

74. In 2012, in resolution 67/138, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session ... on the implementation of the present resolution, including a plan of action to be developed by the United Nations Volunteers programme to integrate volunteering into peace and development in the next decade and beyond, to be submitted to the Assembly and to be considered by Member States".

75. Pursuant to its mandate when it was established by the General Assembly in December 1970 in resolution 2659 (XXV) and its expanded mandate of December 2001 (General Assembly resolution 56/38), UNV is committed to: (a) mobilizing volunteers to enable more people to be directly involved in the humanitarian, peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, sustainable development and poverty eradication work of the United Nations; (b) advocating for volunteerism and civic engagement in peace and development; and (c) pursuing the integration of volunteerism across policy, legislation and programming, and contributing to delivering on internationally agreed development goals.

76. In resolution 67/138, the General Assembly recognized that "volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, education, youth empowerment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, social integration, social welfare, humanitarian action, peacebuilding and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination" and called upon Member States and other stakeholders "to favour the integrating of volunteering in all relevant issues of the United Nations, in particular to ... giving appropriate consideration to the issue in the discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda".

77. The plan of action recognizes volunteerism as a tested and effective mechanism that deepens and broadens civic engagement and sustainable development outcomes. At the heart of the plan of action is a commitment to open channels for those who have been excluded and whose voices have been absent from mainstream development processes. Volunteerism is a strategically viable global mechanism through which, if scaled up, the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals, can advance and a wider range of people can contribute to the planning for and attainment of lasting development.

78. The plan of action requires strong partnerships and commitments from Governments, the United Nations, civil society, volunteer-involving organizations, the private sector and academia to facilitate knowledge and innovation in the field of volunteerism. In particular, investments are required in resources, technology, analyses of the effects of volunteerism, conducive legislative and policy frameworks, multisector networks and programming that integrates volunteerism as a vehicle for development after 2015.

79. The plan of action highlights key development priorities from which Governments can gain the best returns from promoting volunteerism. It also highlights the commitments that Governments can make to systematically integrate volunteerism into development policy and enable volunteer initiatives in the next decade and beyond. Lastly, the plan identifies the institutional arrangements and inputs from State and non-State actors that will be necessary for volunteerism to fulfil its potential in contributing to achieving sustainable development. Beyond that framework, the plan of action needs to be flexible and adaptable, based on the contexts in which volunteer-involving organizations and Governments are operating.

B. Global framework

80. This year, 2015, marks the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the beginning of a new development agenda. The proposed sustainable development goals are built on the principles of universality and transformation, aimed at leaving no one behind. Achieving the ambitions that are envisaged will demand the mobilization of all available resources and the adoption of an approach to implementation that is truly centred on people.

81. While Governments will continue to lead the implementation of the sustainable development goals, their efforts must be complemented by leveraging people's capacities, expertise and skills in an unprecedented and coordinated way.

82. In its consultations on the new United Nations development framework, the United Nations Development Group noted "a huge appetite and demand for involvement not only in the design of the development agenda, but also in its future implementation... People from various walks of life are asking for transformation — not just of the 'what', but also 'how' we do development... They want not only to articulate the problems, but to help find solutions and be involved in implementing them".[4]

[4] United Nations Development Group, *A Million Voices: the World We Want* (2013).

83. Volunteerism is essential to maximizing efforts to attain the goals, as it is a means of concrete engagement that leverages additional and complementary energies, capacities and knowledge.

84. International, national and informal volunteerism can play primary roles in leveraging the knowledge, skills and networks required to achieve the sustainable development goals. Additionally, South-South, triangular and South-North cooperation will forge new approaches and expand knowledge, such as expertise gained from cross-fertilization of initiatives relating to protracted conflicts, health in emergencies and food security strengthening, among others. Progress will demand attitudinal and behavioural changes, for instance in terms of the need for sustainable consumption, which is dependent on formal and informal voluntary engagement at the personal, community, national and global levels.

85. While volunteerism traditionally exists informally at the community level, it is increasingly being complemented by deliberate, institutional-based infrastructures that leverage various tools, such as networking, new technologies and professionalized volunteer management, to galvanize diverse groups of people behind a common purpose or goal. Harnessing the strengths of both those approaches and ensuring that structures exist at local, national and international levels to enable more people to volunteer will contribute both to people's well-being and the sustainability of development results.

86. Recent years have seen a growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Volunteers are the first line of response in the event of disasters.

87. Armed conflict continues throughout the globe. The greatest development deficits are in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Volunteers are often key interlocutors in humanitarian crises, post-conflict situations and peacebuilding efforts.

C. Strategic objectives

88. The plan of action identifies three strategic objectives that would allow volunteerism to contribute effectively to peace, development and humanitarian efforts.

1. Strengthen people's ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement and enabling environments for citizen action

89. Translating the global post-2015 development agenda into goals and targets and formulating strategies and indicators that are relevant at the national and local levels will require wide involvement, acceptance and ownership by people locally. Successful domestication of the goals will require stakeholders to act locally through inclusive dialogue and genuine participation, coupled with strong leadership and financial commitment.

90. To achieve that, strong advocacy initiatives are needed to disseminate the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals. Volunteer-involving organizations can complement government efforts to ensure understanding of the new agenda through concerted outreach, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. Volunteers can bring the voices of marginalized and excluded communities to take part actively and visibly in the related processes.

91. Multi-stakeholder efforts should actively engage people in implementation at the local, national and global levels. The added engagement and collaboration of the private sector and academia are crucial to furthering volunteerism so that it can make a tangible and visible difference in implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Integrate volunteerism into national and global implementation strategies for the post-2015 development agenda

92. Well-facilitated and resourced volunteerism that is integrated into national policies and practices gives people and communities the opportunity to directly affect their own socioeconomic growth and to take local action that helps meet global goals and targets. Countries, people and communities that exhibit high levels of volunteerism are more economically and socially vibrant and are better positioned to meet local, national and global challenges. Volunteerism can strengthen implementation of the sustainable development goals through specific professional expertise, knowledge transfer and participatory efforts, which can, inter alia, enhance employability and strengthen community engagement, social inclusion and social cohesion.

93. When integrated as a cross-cutting resource in the planning process of national and United Nations entities, volunteerism can contribute to the implementation of priority goals relating to the environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction, health, poverty reduction, economic empowerment (especially for youth), gender equality and social and economic inclusion.

94. In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, each country will have its own arrangements for carrying out the plan of action, but there are synergies to be reaped from cooperation at all levels. That calls for national, regional and global platforms for volunteer action and cooperation. Specifically, a global online platform should be created and a global volunteering stakeholder meeting held every five years, the latter starting in 2020. UNV would be the appropriate mandated United Nations entity to facilitate the plan of action. Governments and stakeholders should ensure that adequate resources are available to support those multilevel objectives.

3. Measure volunteerism to contribute to a holistic understanding of the engagement of people and their well-being and be part of the monitoring of the sustainable development goals

95. To fully and systematically leverage the potential of volunteerism, evidence of its contribution to peace and development needs to be strengthened. Its concrete direct and indirect effects, both on host communities and on the volunteers themselves, must be better researched, measured and articulated. That will enable the creation of shared logic models and theories of change that take into account the contributions of volunteerism in development, which in turn will enable a more effective alignment of methods and devising of a common framework for action. A collective and shared global volunteerism research agenda will allow for greater resourcing, collecting and dissemination of key evidence. Strengthening the evidence of the impact of volunteerism and sharing related knowledge within and beyond the volunteer community is a prerequisite for effectively influencing policies, programming and joint action.

96. In order to ensure progress for the most marginalized, including women, children, youth, seniors, differently-abled persons, migrants, ethnic and religious minorities and others excluded for social or economic reasons, monitoring of the sustainable development goals will require high-quality, timely and reliable data down to the local level, disaggregated by different segments of the population. New and more participatory methods of data collection should be envisaged, including online data from people capturing information related to their livelihoods, with such local-level participatory data feeding into big data systems, which aggregate results. Volunteer-involving organizations and volunteers can bolster capacities within communities and national statistical offices for reporting data for use by decision makers and enhance and scale up new approaches to data collection and monitoring.

97. Civil society and volunteer-involving organizations have a specific role to play in engaging people to identify development solutions. For volunteering to be more systematically integrated into national and global development plans and strategies, volunteer groups should regularly convene networks to enhance knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and collective action. Joint dissemination and advocacy are a means of using evidence to influence and facilitate a supportive infrastructure for volunteerism, resource allocation and volunteer mobilization. It will be crucial to engage with countries to scale up successful examples of where volunteerism has made a difference.

98. To ensure inclusion and equity in the post-2015 development agenda, there will need to be indicators to track people's participation and inclusion. Measuring volunteerism in its many facets will contribute to a better understanding of human well-being and sustainable development and can be a proxy indicator of the scope of people's participation in the global goals and targets.

D. Actions

1. Strengthen people's ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement and enabling environments for citizen action

Main action 1. Strengthen community outreach and awareness-raising

99. Volunteer-involving organizations can effectively contribute to generating greater ownership of and support for efforts to localize the sustainable development goals:

(a) **Action**. Governments should commit to establishing regular and long-term dialogue with volunteer-involving organizations during domestication of the sustainable development goals and throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring stages, to ensure continuous engagement with people. For coordination efforts to be fruitful, it is important for Governments to designate focal points for volunteerism in policy and development planning organs and within different line ministries;

(b) **Action**. Volunteer-involving organizations should undertake concerted and locally-adapted efforts to disseminate the importance of the sustainable development goals, including specific national priorities, and highlight the contribution volunteer action can make to address the key areas identified;

(c) **Action**. Governments should support multisectoral, innovative volunteerism initiatives with civil society, including academia and the private sector, to generate greater ownership, resources and engagement in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Integrate volunteerism into national and global implementation strategies for the post-2015 development agenda

Main action 2. Mobilize more and diverse volunteers to broaden the engagement of people

100. As countries align their development plans to the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals, volunteerism and volunteers should be systematically supported and facilitated by Governments, civil society and the private sector to contribute to achieving peace and development. Infrastructures that allow people at all levels of society, including the most marginalized, to volunteer should be established and further strengthened:

(a) **Action**. Governments, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society and the private sector should develop enabling policies and strategies for diverse volunteer opportunities and invest in inclusive volunteer schemes. Voluntary action can take place online or on site, it can be short or long-term, formal or informal and take place in the volunteer's community, across communities or in another country. Schemes need to embrace good management practices, training and policies that ensure social and physical protection. To be inclusive, schemes should mobilize marginalized people by addressing volunteering barriers and special needs and creating organizational conditions that encourage such individuals to volunteer;

(b) **Action**. Governments should broaden the opportunities provided by new technology to further enhance the effects and contributions of volunteers. Strategies should address the digital and technical divide that leaves women and other marginalized groups behind.

Main action 3. Integrate volunteerism into national development plans

101. Governments will benefit from recognizing the transformational, economic and social value of volunteering in achieving national development goals. Volunteerism needs to be seen as a cross-cutting resource for national development planning, to mobilize people's voices and support their participation in the formulation and deployment of plans:

(a) **Action**. Governments, working in partnership with United Nations entities, volunteer-involving organizations, the private sector and civil society, including academia, should integrate volunteerism into national plans and policies, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, "One United Nations" plans, poverty reduction strategies and joint programmatic implementation and monitoring;

(b) **Action**. Governments should contribute to an enabling environment for volunteering through (i) adopting policies and legal frameworks that facilitate volunteering across sectors; (ii) actively promoting volunteer opportunities; (iii) offering incentives and support to volunteer-involving organizations, networks and local authorities with volunteer programmes; and (iv) ensuring public recognition of volunteer efforts;

(c) **Action**. Volunteer-involving organizations should contribute to an enabling environment for volunteering and civic engagement by sharing good practices to scale up opportunities for people to volunteer, building new capacity for well-managed programmes and identifying the community needs, assets and knowledge required to achieve transformational change.

Main action 4. Integrate volunteerism into environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resilience

102. The quality and carrying capacity of the global environment will play a crucial role in the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda. The availability of natural resources, such as water, land and forests, the pollution and degradation of the natural environment, energy resources, climate change and related natural disasters have the potential to severely constrain the achievement of goals aimed at reducing poverty and inequality. Volunteers can contribute significantly to environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management.

103. In many countries, volunteers support and monitor environmental resource management, such as the day to day monitoring of the ambient environmental quality.

104. Climate change mitigation and adaptation requires that individuals and communities, Governments and the private sector, change their patterns of consumption and production and adopt new health and livelihood practices. Formal and informal volunteers can be effective in driving changes in attitudes and behaviour. Local volunteers can, for example, improve the uptake of more sustainable farming and ecosystem management practices, encourage the adoption of new technologies and ensure fair access to resources for marginalized groups.

105. Communities are the first responders during disasters. Further, containing damage and ensuring resilience requires that communities undertake disaster risk planning and preparation well in advance of disaster striking. Local, national, international and online volunteers all play crucial roles in disaster management. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 acknowledged volunteers and community-based organizations as vital stakeholders in supporting disaster risk reduction at all levels. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 further emphasizes that vital role in numerous paragraphs calling for a broader and more people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction and for Governments to engage with relevant stakeholders, including volunteers and marginalized groups, in the design and implementation of policies and plans:

Action. Governments should adopt the Sendai Framework and mainstream volunteerism into disaster risk reduction plans and policies. Volunteering can bring great benefits if integrated into all climate change programming, especially at the local level for adaptation and mitigation. Governments will benefit from setting up real-time local systems for measuring and monitoring environmental indicators and aggregating data to inform policy. Specialist volunteers can set up such systems and train community volunteers to continue to monitor and report.

Main action 5. Facilitate volunteer action in poverty reduction and economic empowerment efforts, including employment (especially for youth)

106. Poverty is multidimensional and spans several aspects of well-being in addition to income. The sustainable development goal of ending poverty will therefore require policy interventions along multiple dimensions, including improving livelihoods and income, increasing access to education, health care and social protection, and ensuring equitable access to public goods and better environmental quality:

(a) **Action**. Governments should engage with volunteers in enacting their policies for poverty alleviation. They should create processes for enhanced civic involvement, especially by the poor and marginalized, in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction policies. Specialist and community volunteers can reinforce the capacities of local government to monitor and report on progress;

(b) **Action**. Governments, together with volunteer-involving organizations, should create, support and scale up formal and non-formal skill and capacity-building programmes, with a focus on enhancing the employability, leadership and social skills of young people. Furthermore, Governments should recognize volunteer experience as a credential of competency and leadership for career advancement.

Main action 6. Ensure volunteerism positively contributes to gender equality, women's empowerment, including economic empowerment, and combating violence against women

107. Volunteers have traditionally played a key role in women's empowerment, such as ensuring access to reproductive health care and reducing violence against women. As primary agents for the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda, women are to be specifically targeted and women's development outcomes specifically addressed in each of the sustainable development goals to reduce gender gaps in post-2015 outcomes. Volunteering should be integrated into all gender mainstreaming processes of the post-2015 development agenda:

Action. Community volunteers and groups have been effective agents in driving attitudinal change towards traditional gender roles among men and women. Similarly, volunteers working alongside public health-care workers have broadened household health information and access to care. It is important, therefore, that volunteers, especially peer-to-peer volunteers, be mainstreamed into all government programming on women's empowerment, reproductive health and violence against women. Governments with programmes and policies already in place to address gender inequality, gender-based violence and reproductive health should ensure that they enlist volunteers to take policies to the grassroots.

Main action 7. Engage volunteers to enhance social cohesion and economic inclusion

108. With the difficulties already noted in the capacity of the Millennium Development Goals to achieve equity in development outcomes, equity and inclusion are emerging as key concerns in the post-2015 development agenda. Volunteers will be indispensable in ensuring inclusive access to services, public goods and opportunities for social and economic participation. Volunteering is a way for marginalized groups to gain a greater sense of ownership and belonging

within their communities and a sense of agency and citizenship. It provides avenues for their capacity and knowledge to inform and influence decision-making from the ground up. To the extent that internal conflicts are often related to exclusion based on unequal access to resources and to the effects of climate change on resources like water, land and forests, the role of volunteers will be critical in preventing conflict and maintaining social cohesion:

(a) **Action**. Volunteer-involving organizations, in cooperation with local authorities, should ensure that their programmes are accessible to marginalized populations and should create appropriate initiatives to include and retain marginalized populations as volunteers;

(b) **Action**. Governments should support joint volunteering platforms and spaces that improve cooperation and coordination between institutions and civil society, aiming at social inclusion and well-being, and fostering voluntary action in marginalized communities;

(c) **Action**. Governments, working in partnership with United Nations entities, volunteer-involving organizations, the private sector and civil society, including academia, should integrate volunteerism into policies and strategies related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with a specific focus on the effects of volunteer action within and between communities on inclusion, equality, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion;

(d) **Action**. Governments, in partnership with other actors, when addressing the pressure on natural resources caused by climate change and other circumstances, should integrate voluntary engagement with affected populations to help ease related inter- and intracommunity tensions and strengthen ownership of the decisions made and actions taken from the ground up.

Main action 8. Strengthen health awareness and support the provision of health services through volunteerism

109. As local health messengers, volunteers have played a crucial role in widening health awareness in communities. Community volunteers have been critical in enhancing citizen participation in health-care systems. The systematic participation of citizens in the formulation and execution of health policy has been shown to lead to positive health outcomes and lower health inequalities. As demonstrated in the recent response to the outbreak of Ebola, volunteers can be crucial to the promotion of appropriate behaviours at the community level in response to large epidemics:

(a) **Action**. Governments should systematically integrate volunteer schemes into their national health policies, ranging from local to national, international and online volunteers, both specialized and youth, for complementary effects and optimal results in the areas of service delivery, data gathering, health-related awareness-raising and behaviour change;

(b) **Action**. Governments should design health policies in a participatory way, working with volunteer-involving organizations to engage informal and formal volunteers in enhancing people's participation.

3. Measure volunteerism to contribute to a holistic understanding of the engagement of people and their well-being and be part of the monitoring of the sustainable development goals

Main action 9. Leverage volunteerism to engage more people in monitoring and reporting on the sustainable development goals

110. While the Millennium Development Goals predominantly defined progress based on average quantitative data, the objectives of the sustainable development goals will require an unprecedented level of disaggregated data, reflecting progress across groups and regions. That will necessitate a major shift in national approaches to data collection and require new skill sets within and beyond national statistical offices. Volunteers can complement capacities for local, national and global review processes:

Action. Create opportunities for people, and in particular marginalized populations, to feed into data collection processes to strengthen the overall accountability of the post-2015 United Nations development framework. Academic, private sector, international, national and online volunteers are innovative resources for the data revolution that is needed. Thanks to new technology, large numbers of both online and on-site volunteers can be involved in community data collection and analysis projects that can feed into national statistics and reporting.

Main action 10. Augment evidence of contribution of volunteerism to development through deepening research and knowledge-sharing on volunteerism

111. Reviews of the evidence available on volunteerism have highlighted the need for more systematic research. Key research needs for the coming decade and beyond should be identified and initiatives shared to address them through partnerships with volunteer-involving organizations, academia and other development practitioners:

(a) **Action**. Governments, the private sector and academic institutions should partner with civil society to expand and resource the global volunteer research agenda. More studies are needed on volunteerism (with data disaggregated by gender, age and disability) in order to identify comparable measures of volunteerism and its effects on sustainable development and to be used as a foundation for policies and programmes;

(b) **Action**. Volunteer-involving organizations should strengthen the way in which the contributions of volunteerism to peace and development are articulated, measured and reported. That can be done by promoting comparable tools and mechanisms for measuring the contribution of volunteerism to development and for assessing the positive benefits accrued to those who volunteer;

(c) **Action**. Governments, volunteer-involving organizations and other stakeholders should facilitate knowledge exchange between countries and actors to allow innovative ideas to be shared, actions scaled up, synergies increased and joint advocacy initiatives undertaken. South-South, South-North, triangular, regional and thematic knowledge exchanges should be fostered through virtual and on-site interactions that improve knowledge building and learning, as well as engaging in joint initiatives as suggested in the plan of action.

Main action 11. Devise comparable volunteerism indicators for monitoring the sustainable development goals

112. To ensure inclusive and equitable progress, indicators need to be devised that allow Governments and development practitioners to better understand how people, especially those who are excluded, are participating in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Volunteerism can be a good proxy indicator for civic engagement, as volunteerism happens at every level and frequently reaches the most marginalized people in communities:

(a) **Action**. As Governments monitor overall progress in reaching the sustainable development goals, it will be important that the contribution of volunteerism is captured and embedded in any reporting mechanism;

(b) **Action**. National statistical offices should employ existing methods, such as national household surveys, to assess the contribution of volunteerism and at the same time create new tools to monitor progress and new methods to better capture the qualitative contributions of volunteering;[5]

(c) **Action**. To complement that process, volunteer-involving organizations should prepare regular reports that demonstrate how volunteerism accompanies the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Inter alia, a combined report could be presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/290, in which the Assembly encouraged different stakeholders, including volunteer groups, "to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum and for actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels" and decided that representatives of relevant stakeholders should be allowed to "submit documents and present written and oral contributions".

E. Institutional arrangements

113. The plan of action establishes an overall framework and set of actions that will lead to transformative change. While implementation of the post-2015 development agenda is primarily the responsibility of Governments, it is also dependent on a wide range of actors in the public, private and civil society sectors at the local, national, regional and international levels. Implementation of the plan of action requires more and regular linkages and information-sharing between all the stakeholders involved.

114. The achievement of the plan of action will depend on the support of Governments and strong institutional arrangements from the national through regional to global levels. In particular, it will determine the ability of UNV to convene stakeholders and coordinate actions to accompany Governments, United Nations entities and volunteer-involving organizations in the promotion and integration of volunteerism in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

[5] Existing tools include the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (2011) and the United Nations *Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.9, to be revised in 2015).

115. Consequent to the adoption of the plan of action in 2015, it is proposed that situation analyses be undertaken with Governments at the national level on three elements of infrastructural arrangements: (a) policy and legislation; (b) functioning schemes and organizations at the national and subnational levels; and (c) the state of impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation of volunteer initiatives. That mapping will be the starting point for gleaning a set of good practices and for strengthening implementation of the plan of action. The information generated will feed into regional preparatory meetings and the establishment of a platform for regional cooperation for volunteering and the post-2015 development agenda. The knowledge generated in those preparatory meetings will then feed into a global meeting, ideally in 2020, at which Governments can use four years of experience in integrating volunteerism into that agenda to determine the scale of mobilization and type of schemes needed in the future and to share best practices in volunteer management and volunteer-driven development programming.

F. Resource arrangements

116. Governments, United Nations entities, private sector enterprises, civil society, academic institutions and other development partners should increase investment and improve and broaden regional and institutional collaboration during the coming decade and beyond to draw on the value of volunteering in addressing development challenges, fostering peace and advancing societal well-being. The plan of action can only be successfully implemented if Governments voluntarily ensure that the necessary coordination mechanisms are in place. Broader investments in data collection, measurement, research and knowledge generation would significantly enhance the quality of development programming.

117. The United Nations Volunteer programme has the necessary expertise, experience and knowledge, but requires additional resource capacity to provide the necessary technical support for the analyses of national situations and to serve as the focal point for collating and analysing the resulting information, as well as facilitating the regional preparatory meetings and acting as the secretariat for the global meeting in 2020.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

118. The sustainable development goals will create unprecedented global and national urgency to accelerate progress in the recognition, promotion, facilitation, networking and integration of volunteer action by Governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and multinational actors, including the United Nations system.

119. The present report highlights how volunteerism integrated into programming contributes to progress on national and global priorities, inter alia education, health, governance, poverty reduction, jobs, water and sanitation, food, security and peace, environment, youth, gender and social inclusion. Governments and other stakeholders are increasingly recognizing and valuing volunteerism and facilitating volunteerism infrastructures, including drafting policies, designating official focal points, supporting networks and schemes, improving knowledge of volunteerism

and management standards, introducing volunteer accreditation and engaging in joint programming.

120. However, challenges, such as shrinking civil society spaces, decreasing investments in volunteering, disparities in access to new technologies, research and evidence gaps on volunteerism and increasing volunteer security and protection concerns, especially in crisis contexts, require a redoubling of initiatives and efforts to ensure that people's voice and engagement are recognized as an essential ingredient in achieving peace and the sustainable development goals.

121. Establishing regular and long-term dialogue between Governments and volunteer-involving organizations during the process of domesticating the sustainable development goals, as well as the planning, implementation and monitoring stages, will strengthen people's ongoing engagement. Governments should stimulate coordination and facilitation through official volunteerism focal points at policy and development planning levels and within line ministries.

122. Governments should promote and facilitate the inclusion of all peoples — youth, seniors, women, students, migrants, refugees, differently-abled persons, minorities and other marginalized groups — to leverage the full potential of volunteerism. To widen participation, the following should be strengthened: supportive structures with enabling policy and legislative frameworks; the promotion of volunteer action through volunteer days, events and awards; volunteering schemes and platforms with appropriately differentiated opportunities; quality management standards and training for volunteerism; the collection of good practices and knowledge exchanges; and sustainable support and resources.

123. Governments should recognize growing opportunities in international volunteering, including South-South, South-North, triangular and diaspora arrangements. At the same time, they should support informal volunteering, which often reflects local social and cultural expressions of solidarity and community.

124. Governments, the private sector, the media, academia and volunteer-involving organizations should expand global and national partnerships for enhancing the contribution of volunteerism to the post-2015 development agenda.

125. Governments, in partnership with United Nations entities, volunteer-involving organizations and other stakeholders should integrate volunteerism into national plans and policies, poverty reduction strategies, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, "One United Nations" plans, joint programming, reports and conference outcomes.

126. Governments should mainstream volunteerism into disaster risk reduction and climate risk management planning and strategies. Volunteers could take part in all aspects of those plans and strategies, from expert technical contributions to online crisis monitoring, local preparedness and community-based adaptation and disaster response.

127. Governments should facilitate volunteer action in poverty reduction and supporting sustainable livelihoods. The multidimensional reality of poverty requires holistic responses, including better access to employment, education, health care, social protection and public goods. Volunteers can support integrated planning, implementation and monitoring, especially when they are from the communities concerned. Governments, other employers and educational institutions should

continue to promote volunteering, especially by youth, to enhance their employability and learning and should recognize and value volunteer work in recruitment processes.

128. Governments should incorporate volunteerism within gender mainstreaming strategies. Peer-to-peer and informal volunteering to address gender inequality and violence against women are paths towards empowering civic and political participation.

129. Governments should ensure that volunteerism is integrated into conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and strategies. Volunteer action contributes to building social cohesion and strengthening solidarity and mutual support.

130. The protection, security and well-being of volunteers must be of the highest priority. Governments should approve and apply policies safeguarding both the physical and social protection of volunteers. Measures must be in place to ensure the safety of volunteers and guarantee that adequate death, disability and medical benefits are universally provided.

131. Governments should work with academia, civil society and the private sector to enhance research on volunteerism, especially to produce disaggregated data on contributions to sustainable development as a foundation for policy and programmes and for monitoring progress on the sustainable development goals. Measuring volunteering can be a means of tracking citizen participation. Volunteers can also support the monitoring of the national sustainable development agenda by contributing to big data collection, adding expert capacities to national statistical offices and stimulating community inputs. To facilitate national comparisons, Governments should support the use of common measurement indicators and methodologies, such as the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*.

132. Governments, volunteer-involving organizations and other stakeholders should facilitate knowledge and information networks and platforms for sharing innovative ideas, scaling up practices, sharing resources and building collaborations. Given the opportunities provided by new technologies, Governments should promote Internet access to broaden volunteering, promote volunteerism, facilitation and networking, not neglecting the need to ensure equitable access by women and marginalized groups.

133. Governments are asked to approve the section IV of the present report, entitled "Integrating volunteering in peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond, 2016-2030". In doing so, Governments, United Nations entities and other multilateral organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia and volunteer-involving organizations would be committing to support the actions and institutional and resource arrangements suggested therein. Given its continuing mandate for the promotion and integration of volunteerism for peace and development, UNV is the appropriate United Nations entity to support its implementation.